

Issue Characterization: CBNMS - Fishing Activities

Problem Statement:

Specific impacts on Sanctuary resources from fishing activities are not well understood. Some of the issues related to fishing or harvesting activities to be explored by the working group include: 1) impacts on benthic habitats from fishing gear, such as bottom trawling and longlines, and 2) impacts to trophic interactions from over-harvesting forage/ lower trophic level species (e.g. krill). Although CBNMS does not directly manage specific fisheries, it does have a mandate to protect the entire Sanctuary ecosystem and the authority to manage human uses that impact Sanctuary resources.

Issue Description:

More than 180 species of fish have been identified in CBNMS. Many species of rockfish can be found at all depths and habitats on and around the Bank. Lingcod are especially numerous in the wintertime, when they move up to the Bank to spawn. Many species of flatfish use the soft-bottom habitat around the Bank, and albacore tuna and salmon frequent the Sanctuary on a seasonal basis. Albacore and salmon both feed on lanternfishes which migrate nightly into shallow surface layers from deeper daytime haunts. The recovery of Pacific sardine populations is apparent in the waters surrounding the Bank.

Commercial fisheries generally target rockfish, flatfish, salmonoids, and albacore tuna. Most of the private boats and charter vessels that fish CBNMS are from Bodega Bay, although rough ocean conditions often prevent smaller recreational boats from accessing Cordell Bank. Gear types used in CBNMS include: hook and line, long lines, bottom trawlers and mid-water trawlers. Management of commercial and recreational fisheries in California is the responsibility of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) in State waters (0-3 nautical miles), and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) in Federal waters (3 to 200 miles) (CBNMS is entirely in Federal waters). The NMSP does not manage specific fisheries but it does protect the entire sanctuary ecosystem and the authority to manage human uses that may impact Sanctuary resources.

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Related Issues That Came Up During Scoping:

BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

- Need special protection of biodiversity at special places (e.g. Salinas River, kelp beds, Bolinas lagoon)
- Develop action plans specific to NMSP to help recover endangered species or key species at risk

GENERAL CBNMS FISHING ISSUES

- Develop programs with fishing community to promote positive aspects of fishing, such as fish stocks that are sustainable
- Coordinate with NMFS in the coho salmon recovery plan and other fishery management plans
- Pursue fishing regulations only in Federal waters
- Define Sanctuary role in fisheries management
- Regulate shore fishermen separately from commercial and sport fisherman in regards to possible management and possible fishing closures
- Ban or restrict bottom trawling in sanctuaries
- Protect biodiversity by Sanctuaries adopting more fully protected marine reserves throughout region
- Utilize fishermen for monitoring efforts

- Fishery management agencies should work more cooperatively together on issues

Other Efforts Underway

- The California Dept. of Fish and Game, under the mandate of the Marine Life Protection Act, is currently developing a plan to restructure existing marine-managed areas and to establish new marine reserves (no take zones) throughout the state. Cordell Bank does not fall under this program as it lies solely in Federal waters.
- The Pacific Fisheries Management Council is starting to look into using Essential Fish Habitat Reserves (EFHRs) as a fishery management tool.